

## **Advent calendar EN - 25 days of Dustane by LeyRx**

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**Summary:** I was motivated so there 25 stories without link between them of the ship DustinxJane from Stranger Things!

## 1. 1 First Meeting

### DAY 1

#### First meeting

Eleven was running as fast as she could in those unknown woods, trying to run away from the armed men that Papa sent after her. If they caught her, they would kill her immediately and if they wouldn't kill her, they would bring her back and she knew that Papa would punish her. She didn't want to go back, it was out of question. She was terrified by the monster and the portal she had opened was already too many portals. At least maybe, killing the nice man who had offer her chips would slow them. She didn't want to hurt anyone, but if she had no other choices, she wouldn't hesitate. She didn't want them to bring her back, not with the monster, not with Papa.

The rain was falling so hard on her and around her that her bare feet slipped on the on the ground and sank on the mud. She didn't like feeling her own body beeing wet like that, it wasn't a good thing. Even if she didn't really know what it was, she knew she could fear a cold or an influenza because of the risks of dying because of those.

She was missing the man who gave her chips a little. He had a deep voice and she woud have liked to appreciate his company a little more.

Her feet slipped on the mud and she fell on ground, making a little sound of pain. It took her a little moment to go back on her feet, drying the tears on her eyes. It was at this moment she saw a little flash of light. She started to panicked when she heard a voice who was too youn to be the voice of one ot the armed men. She stayed still, too scared to act, and soon saw appear in front of her a boy of her age who was pushing a bike with one of his hand, holding a radio on the other hand.

She couldn't see well what he was looking like. The flash was luminous enough to blind her and make a hugh shadow on the boy, it was dark and raining so much but she could discern he was wearing a hat, had curly hair and was a little fat.

She tighten her arms around herself, having no idea what was the good way to act, trying to fix the boy even if the flash was hurting her eyes while he was putting the radio to his mouth to talk to someone who she couldn't hear well the voice.

"I found someone! ... No, it's not Will, I think it's a girl, she seems lost and scared! ... I'm bringing her who? ... At Mike's, okay! Over!"

He put down the antenna of his radio and got close to Eleven, slowly to not make her run away. He reach out his hand to her to invit her to follow him and after an hesitation, she accepted to take it and to follow him. He put off his jacket and cap and put them on her before put her on the bike, pushing it as fast as he could on the side of the road.

He asked her what was her nam but she didn't answer, her hands hooked on him, highly shaking. He didn't seems to be bother because he told her on a strong voice his name was Dustin.

She had no idea who he was but he didn't seem to be a bad person. She looked at him with attention, trying to learn more about him just by it. There was low chances she whould learn anything this way but she could at least learn how he seemed to react by being watched.

Eleven liked this boy well. She hoped he wouldn't be kill by Papa's armed men. The best way to protect him was still to warn him about it when they would arrived wherever that boy wanted to took her.

## 2. 2 Sherlock

Day 2

Sherlock

Jane Hopper was living with Dustin Henderson for a long time now, at the 221B Baker Street. She couldn't just say she worked for him or with him because it wasn't exactly that. She had a job *thanks to* him. To be perfectly honest, the job of Jane was to talk about the job of Dustin. That meant she was writing on a blog the criminal investigations that her room-mate resolved.

If she had to be honest, it hasn't always be as fun as it was today and it would never be easy. For the second part, she could live and accept that she would never know that since nothing has been easy about her life. In fact, she had to admit that it was a little easier since she came back from the war. She couldn't say there wasn't any aftereffect – just for the physical part, she limped everytime she was tired and her nose was bleeding involuntarily of her will everytime the situation was a little too speed, and it was out of the question to talk about the psychological aftereffects – but she had met Dustin and he had accepted her problems as much as she had accepted his.

Having money by telling about the job of someone else was a bit weird but the job of Dustin Henderson was unique like no one another was: he was a consulting detective. Inspector Hopper was on the job for a long time, so long that he had the time to watch Jane grow up and improve her relationship with her step-brother Will, but that was something else. Her father took first really bad her association with Dustin but she didnt let him any choice. Working with Dustin Henderson was a good things for her. The excitement of the work had help her to get over all of her problems. And she liked the company of Dustin.

-O-O-O-

The body that was found by the police excited Dustin. It always was a little funny to see the young man watching everywhere, searching for clues and solving the crime with this glow of excitement in the eyes

as if it was the first time. Everytime it happened, she found him cute, even if the situation wasn't about it.

"Jane, you're bleeding."

Jane got out of her reflexions, a white tissue obstructed her view. She thanked Dustin and put the tissue in her nose before concentrate on the crime scene.

"It's a man, about thirty-quarantine. We think he has been strangle." mumble Hopper watching closely Dustin who was inspecting the corpse. Jane was always surprise to see that her father distrusted Dustin while still asking him for help. Dustin said it was because of her and she didn't know how to take it.

-Actually, he is 37. By the size of his butt, he works in an office but does sport to keep fit. The trace of his wedding ring tells us that he is married, has two young children and a big dog if we pay attention to the marks on his pant and tie. The color of his nails tells that he smoke sometimes but had start to stop and the dirtiness on his shoes show that he lost his driver's licence.

-That's amazing." whispered Jane, now looking at the body, trying to see what he could see. She couldn't see everything but with training, she learned to notice little things.

-I hate when you do that." retorted Hopper while grunting, bothered by the pride on Dustin's face everytime she gave him a compliment. Couldn't you just tell us how he died?

-Strangled to death. The murderer wanted to make us believe of an aggression that ended badly but didn't do well. An aggression turn to rarely bad with strangulation and when it happened, it's mostly happen with bare hands and with something that thin. Looking at the thickness of the thing that strangled that poor man to death, I think it's a guitar rope of bad quality. It's a revenge executed by a tall person, not well organised and with angry issues strong enough to push him to murder. He prepared his shot for a long time but didn't think it would happen that quickly, that's why he tried to make us believe of a robbery. He surely wanted to get rid of the corpse at first but since his victim produced an unexpected anger, he had to

improvise.

-It's incredible, as always.

-It's nothing more than observations but I do appreciate your enthusiasm."

Dustin loved to be bothered without hindering that he liked having Jane's attention. He didn't do it a lot, just a little anytime they could see the others, but he knew it would affect Hoppe because he was caring too much and being too protective about his daughter.

When Dustin had ended his work, he took Jane by the elbow, saluted Hopper's team and quit the crime scene with a lightly dancing step. He proposed to his friend to go to eat and she accepted without any hesitation.

### 3. 3 From the others point of view

#### Day 3

#### From the other's point of view

Will thought that Dustin and Jane went well together, in a strange way. He didn't exactly know how they fell in love with each other but it worked. It didn't bother him at all because even if they were a thing, they still spent time with the other, which made more explicit that their relation was different than what other could imagine because they never kissed and just hold each other hands but it wasn't a problem for him as long as they were happy.

Lucas was the one to notice the sooner that there was a thing between Jane and Dustin. In fact, he had been more surprised that the first time they met the young girl, Dustin didn't already said that he was in love with her like he would said at that time for every girls who gave him more than thirty seconds of their time, which became obvious when Mike told them that he had kissed El. So it didn't really surprised that they were together but more because Dustin didn't rub it to their face. Maybe he had grow up finally. Not that it was his concern.

Mike was still a little tense anytime he saw Dustin and Jane holding hands. It wasn't that he was still in love with her and jealous of him, or the reverse, but more that he had the feeling they took time to be together because of him. He knew Dustin first refused to be in a relationship because of him so he felt guilty. And well he could admit that they were cute together so he was glad they didn't force themselves to stay friends just because he was her ex.

Max still was surprised by how delicate Dustin was with Jane. He didn't took her for a fragile thing like Mike had done but, in an other side, he rarely took the first step in their relationship, letting it go as slow as was Jane needed it. It was surprising and since Jane didn't want to go to fast too, they stagnated at the "holding-hand" step, which was absolutely adorable and strange.

Steve loved Dustin and didn't hide it, he was his favorite child. So

seeing him with Jane didn't bother him because his friend seemed happy this way. He kept an eye on them just to be sure but never went to have problems with Jane. And he felt a weird maternal pride anytime he saw his children being happy so he watched them with tenderness, bothering them just a little and didn't hide his pride too.

Robin found their couple simple, like any other, but still with the small advantage that as long as they would stay together, she would stay the main witness of Steve's pride. And she liked Dustin, he was a small smart kid and she kept an eye on this relationship without showing it, just to be sure everything was fine.

Erica didn't like Lucas's friends a lot but she could tolerate Dustin. So everytime she saw Jane, she asked her more and more questions, just to know. It wasn't like she liked Dustin or was worried for him.

Hopper had tried to talk with Dustin but didn't have to. Joyce talked about everything before and made sure that everything would be fine so Dustin remembered everything and reassured him by being his best to make him understand that he understood his struggles and that he didn't want to be a problem to anyone.

Joyce let it happen. She had nothing against Jane or Dustin so she just let them do their things, confident. It was the role of a good mother to believe her children after all. And well, she knew more than no one that they knew what they were doing.



## 4. 4 Confess

Day 4

Confess

Jane liked to spend time with Dustin. They never really had a moment for themselves alone but she really liked her friend. She liked him really much so she enjoyed every moments that they had together.

They were at her home, eating eggos to celebrate their finished work that they made together. Jane was so sure that they had made the best teamwork and that they would have the best note and her enthusiasm amused her friend so much that he didn't hide his laugh. It was fine like this.

Dustin put down his fork after finished his eggos and looked at his hands, seemed like he wanted to say something. Jane looked up at him to ask him what was the problem and she noticed he was blushing, which was intriguing. She wondered if she had done something to bother her friend like that.

"Are you okay?"

-Yes! Yes, of course. It's just that... I want to tell you something, but I don't know how.

-It's okay, just tell me without overthinking it.

-But it's important, I have to do it right.

-What do you mean?

-It's complicated.

-Then, just tell it. Even if it's important, it's better that you say it in a way that suits you the best."

She tried her more reassuring smile and it seemed to work. Dustin untied his hands, reinstalled his cap, lost himself for a second in his

thoughts and then looked at her again.

"I love you."

Jane eyes went wide by the surprise and then she remembered all the signals her friend had given her recently. It was way more logical now that she knew that.

Dustin worried about the girl silence and felt guilty. He looked at her to ask her to forget about what he said when he felt a hand on his. She smiled at him again, holding softly his hand.

"Me too.

-Really?

-Of course.

-When I say that I love you, I don't mean like loving a friend-...

-I know. Me too."

Then, before he could react or answer, she took him against her and hugged him with a smile until she felt him hugging her back, jiggling softly, relieved by her positive answer.

## 5. 5 The first words

Day 5

First words

*Can you make it fly?*

Jane never knew what to think of the phrase written on his arm. It was supposed to be the first thing her soulmate would tell her but it made no sense. When she was little, Kali told her it was because she had powers. So she jumped from a branch to try to fly and ended with a broken arm. Kali then told her that the phrase meant she could make objects fly so she threw objects in all her bedroom all an afternoon before being punished and understanding she just broke her favorite doll and her racing car. She stopped listening to Kali for a whole week and was angry at her.

When she grew up, she stopped looking at the phrase. She didn't like it, it made no sense so she did her best to forget about it. She almost did it.

When Kali and her were adopted, she was both surprised and happy. She now had a father, a mother and two brothers added to her sister. She couldn't dream of better. But her social anxiety made impossible for her to go to school for an entire month. Every time she got closer to the middle school, the sight of all the students scared and petrified her so Joyce had to bring her back home and every night Will helped her with her lessons. Little by little, she won to appease her social anxiety but Joyce wanted to be sure she was perfectly used to her new environment before putting her back to school. That was why she took her to her job. Seeing people going by was a an easy way for Jane to help her go through her fear of others and the anxiety it gave her.

She was excited by the wait to go to middle school.

-o-o-o-

One night, Will got visit. Four person of his age, three boys and a girl.

Apparently, there were doing roleplay, whatever it was, and installed themselves on the table of the living room. Joyce and Jim were out in a date, Kari were somewhere in town and Jonathan had an eye on them but not really – he believed in them.

Jane couldn't dare to get closer to this group of strangers so she was watching and analysing them closely from the door of her room. Sometimes, they looked at her to so she ran away in her room. The third time, Will called her back.

"You can come to play if you want."

She hesitated before finally get on the armchair of the living room on what she perched to watch them at a reasonable distance. She couldn't see well but it was better.

"Have you ever made roleplay before, Jane?"

She made no with her head so Will took the time to explain her rules and their campaign. She almost understood everything, it was interesting.

At some moment, they get themselves in a situation where they had to get a weird machine to fly – Jane was curious to know why they couldn't say it was a plane – and it as to be Dustin, if she was correct, to throw the dices. Lucas and Mike were complaining that he would miss it like he did for all the other during the party and that they didn't to die because of him. So the ginger one, Max, looked at her with a smile.

"Why don't you ask Will's new sister to throw the dices for you?"

-Her name is Jane." reminded Will before looking at her too, like the others. "Do you want to?"

-Why?

-So we don't lose the game!" answered Lucas like if it was obvious.

-Come on Jane, please. Don't let us down on this one."

Let them down? But they weren't on the plane, so not up, how could

she let them down? Dustin held out his dices to her, grinning widely.

"Can you make it fly?"

*Can you make it fly?*

Jane got up in a mechanic way and got closer, starring at him with wide eyes until he blushed. She took the dices in eh hands and threw them with a particular attention before looking again at Dustin. She opened her mouth to talk but found nothing to say. But she wanted to tell him he was her soulmate but didn't know how to.

Everyone screamed with joy and she took refuge on the armchair again to ran from all of these noises. Will noticed her panic and slap his hand on te table, not strong enough to scare her but enough to got the attention of the others.

"Let's take a break and eat something."

Dustin was the first one to agree with that idea. Will then look at Jane.

"Want something?"

-Eggos."

Will then went in the kitchen to give everyone food. While this, Dustin looked à Jane again.

"It was awesome, you're good at it!"

-I just threw the dices."

Dustin frowned and open his mouth to talk then close it again. He look at the others who where preparing a plan for the following of the party and got closer to her to talk to her in a confident tone..

"Are you my soulmate?"

She nodded. He sat on the ground against the armchair and showed her his arm where was the phrase.

*I just threw the dices.*

"It's because I know roleplay that I knew it had a link. Well, not only but it was more obvious like that."

She showed him her own arm.

"I thought I was a superhero when I was a kid. It got me trouble so I hated this phrase because I thought it was a lie. But it wasn't.

-What do you think about having me as a soulmate?

-Nothing. I already knew I had a soulmate and that it would be a stranger."

Dustin laughed at that, giving them the attention of the others but it didn't really bother Jane that much.

"It logic when we think about it like that. I think it's cool that your my soulmate. You seems really nice. I hope we will get along."

He gave her his largest smile and held out his hand so she shook it. He got on his feet when he heard Will coming back and went back at the table, giving her a last hand gesture.

Jane decided that having Dustin for soulmate was a good thing. He seemed nice, it was reassuring. She hoped it would stay that way.

## 6. 6 Under a shooting star

Day 6

Under a shooting star

Dustin had wait a very long moment le shooting stars rain that was supposed to happened that six of december. He had ask all his friend to come and the idea seemed good to them too but he knew that Mike, Will, Lucas and Max would be more into the romantic part than the scientist so he asked too Steve and Robin but if the first could take him, he didn't understand a lot about sciences and the second was stuck in bed with a huge flu during two days already and was desperate that she couldn't follow them at that post Billy and Steve had found to look at the stars. In fact, il already knew he would be the only one interested by all the scientist aspect of this thing. It was okay, because he loved being with his friend anyway.

The night of the six, they were all at the famous spot of Billy and Steve – wich was a huge cliff with a view of all the neighbor city next to Hawkins – and Dustin understood quickly why they found this place at first. Will and Mike hid fast somewhere under shadow, and Max and Lucas didn't hide themselves to kiss and hold hands while Billy and Steve didn't even got out of the car. He sat at the limit of the cliff, took his binoculars to look at the stars closely.

Some of them had already travel the sky when he saw something way bigger goes by. He left hid binoculars to look at the sky to saw that what was happening really was big and crashing near to them. Was he the only one seeing this? He turn back and saw that yes. He looked again at the enormous things falling between the trees near and creating a little earthquake. He was mad that no one was paying attention.

Dustin check to make sure no one was paying attention to him and run as fast as possible to the thing that had fallen from the sky. It would have been faster if he had his bike but he had no choice since Steve took him with his car and it was more easy by feet to be discret.

He sank in the forest for a long time and was afraid that he went to the wrong direction when he almost fell into a pit. He stopped just in time and fall on his knees.

Below the pit, there was a thing that seemed like a meteor. He heard himself shooting a little scream of excitement and slide down the slope, almost rolling to the bottom. He stepped closer to the meteor and get his hand more close to touch it when she just opened in two half like a giant coconut. He screamed again and stepped back quickly, jumping, not wanting to bother the form of life that would step out of it but nothing happened, just smoke snaking out quickly.

He appeased his deception, telling himself that he just found a meteor and that it was awesome when a dark form appeared on the coconut-meteor. The form got closer slowly before crashing on the ground in front of Dustin.

It could have been a deception but he just had once again a little scream and lower on his knees to help the alien who had just fallen at his feet. The alien had a humanoid form and look like they wore a poncho that covered all their body.

"I... I'm enchanted to meet you! My name is Dustin, welcome on our planet, planet Earth. Did you came in peace? Alone? Do you talk my language?"

The being lift their head to look at Dustin when they were at the same height. Their head was covered with a helmet that made him think of an egg, two big eyes entirely brown, two ears really long like an elf and a translucent skin. The being held up their hand in a gauntlet to him and to put it on his chest and before he could have done anything, he heard a strange voice, which made very hard to put it a gender.

**"My-na-me-is-El-e-ven.**

-Eleven? What a weird name but okay! You understand me?

**-I-un-der-stand-you.**

-Did you came in peace?



**-Y-es. I-have-fa-l-len."**

Listening to them and the intonation of the way they were acting about themselves, he felt them like a girl.

"You've fallen? From the sky?"

She nodded and pointed the sky at the same moment a shooting star passed. Dustin heard her bursting in joy.

"Shooting stars are alien spaceship?"

**Y-es. But-not-al-ways."**

She lift her other hand to grab Dustin cap.

**"What-is-it?"**

-A cap. You normally put it to protect from the sun but some peoples just wear them by habit.

**-I-can?**

-Yes, go on!"

She put it slowly on her head, like he had just done before and lower her eyes on him after that.

**"Do-I-look-li-ke-y-ou?"**

-Having a cap isn't enough for us to be alike but it suit you!

**-Th-ank-y-ou. I-li-ke-it."** She gave it back to him. **"Y-ou-can-t-say-y-ou-saw-me."**

-What? Why? It's an amazing discovery, we are not alone in the universe and-

**-Y-our-p-la-net-is-n-t-rea-dy."**

-What? Not ready for what?

**-To-o-ther-fo-rms-of-li-fe. You-are-too-sen-si-b-les."**

-Then why did you came on Earth?

**-I-fa-ll.**

-It wasn't on purpose?

**-No. So-rry.**

-You don't have to be sorry. Do you need help fo your space ship?

**-No. I-wen-t-out-of-it-to-see-if-I-had-n-t-des-troy-ed-a-ny-thing.  
So-rry-that-I-da-ma-ge-you-r-p-la-net.**

-It's okay, it know how to repair itself when something fall on it.

**-How-u-se-ful.**

-Right? I suppose you'll have to leave soon, to be the more discret possible.

**-Y-es. I-ha-ve-to.**

-I... Wait!"

He started to search on his pockets, a little away, before putting out a chocolate bar that was a little crushed and melt and it gave it to her.

"Can I offer you terrian food? I don't know what your allergies are but-"

Eleven took the chocolate bar and smelled it before opening her gigantic mouth with two row of teeth and eat it.

"No, you-... You're supposed to take the plastic out before?"

The alien head bent on the side and kept eat for a moment before taking out the ripped plastic from her mouth and looking at it with curiosity.

**"Wha-t-shou-l-d-I-do-wi-th-the-p-la-s-tic?**

-Just... Give it to me, I'll get rid of it in a trash can.

**-Wh-y?**

-That's where trash goes.

**-Y-ou-put-t-rash-a-rou-n-d-you-r-foo-d?**

-It's complicated.

**-I-see-that. Than-k-you-for-you-r-foo-d. I-don-t-have-a-ny-thing-to-you.**

-It's okay. Simply, come and tell me the day Earth would be ready to meet others forms of life.

**-But...O-kay. I-ll-co-me.**

-Thanks.

-Dustin!"

He turned back when he heard his name and swore.

"Crap! You sould go, my friends are searching me."

He turned again towards Eleven.

Dustin opened his eyes, lost, earing the voices of his friends being closer. He was a the bottom of the crater and there were nothing else. The crater looked like if it was old and the floor cold under him. It was like if there never been a meteor one second before nor a big brown eyes alien with giant mouth. He heard Steve sliding up to him before seeing him.

"Henderson! Are you okay dude, what happened?"

He promised Eleven not to tell anything.

"I thought I saw a thing.

-You did a nice fall. How do you feel?

-My head hurt;

-You don't say. It's been an hour since we've been looking for you my dude, if you were knocked out all this time, it's only fair that you're hurt.

-One hour?"

But he only talked for a few minutes to Eleven... Il got up with Steve's help, grumbling, and relied on him when he was up.

"I take you back home, you need to rest. Your mother is going to kill me.

-I'll protect you.

-Right, right, whatever you want."

Dustin let himself being took back to Billy and Steve's spot and got the right to go to the dead spot on the car. Everyone seemed disappointed to end the night so early but they seemed worried about him so no one said a thing.

During the time Steve drove they home, he vaguely recomforted Will and Mike – Lucas and Max were on Billy's car – and was looking at the sky by the car window. The rain of shooting stars was over but, when he was pratically back to his home, he was certained that he saw a very big shooting star go fast in the sky.

## 7. 7 Scales

Day 7

Scales

During all her life, Jane had seduce a lot of humans. She didn't know how it exactly worked but Kali always said she was proud of her when she did it, saying all humans were bad and that she was right to act like that. She had no reasons not to believe her so she listened to her and followed her education. Despite that, she wasn't sure to like drowning humans even if she had done it for so long.

One morning, while the sun was rising at the orizon and waking up the ocean where she was, Jane saw a fishing boat going by. She got closer of the thing and read it name at the front: the Scoop Troop. It was a name like an other but it seemed to her that human rarely named their boat with two words. It wasn't important, she will drown one of them.

She spent the entire day to study them. They were four on it, it was really a tiny boat, two men and two women. The man and woman who where the oldest were in their thirties and in good physical condition. The youngest was on her early twenties and seemed a little thinner than the other but she spoke loudly and wouldn't be easy to drown in the light water with her skin color (it wouldn't be easy to hide her body while drowning her). She so chose the last member. He wasn't the youngest or oldest, talked a lot and laughed very loudfly and was fat. Kali loved human flesh, she would surely love that she give him to her. She the started to watch him more than the other, waiting for the moment he would be alone to seduce him to his death with her voice.

The day after, not so long before the sun was at his highest spot, she found a moment where he was alone. The man was sitting at the bottom of the boat and was watching the sea. She got closer slowly, moving her tail slowly to get closer to him. He saw her too late.

Her voice resonated in his ear through her song and she looked at him getting closer to the edge and leant forward. She got her body to

the hips out of the water and sang softer, holding out her arms in his direction to invite him to follow her. He leant more and more toward her and his perdition when one of the sailors, the other man, called him. The young man got out of his trance immediately. She hurried into the water but it was too late, he had seen her. She panicked and swam away from the boat, just enough to still watch him. No one believed those saying they saw mermaid so she didn't have to worry for that.

She couldn't see him again for the rest of the day and when the boat went back to the harbor, she watched the sailor go away without giving up for that little. She said she would drown this man so she wouldn't stop before doing it.

The days after, the sailor was never alone. There was always at least one other person with him and it was bothering her but she didn't give up and tried again every day to watch this sailor, being on his view when he was the only one looking in a direction and singing a few notes to get him.

Her day finally came. A hot afternoon that heated water and men, her sailor was alone, at the same spot than the last time. It was her moment, she might never have this chance again. She put her head out of the water and sang like never before. At the moment the sailor turned toward her and bent a little, she grabbed him by his clothes and pulled him in the water with all her strength.

The body of the man fell into the water with a loud noise so she hurried to take him into the depths, wrapping her tail around him and jabbed her sharpened claws into his clothes to stick him against her this way. He struggled with all his strength to get free, pushing her and trying to go back to the surface, which surprised and scared her. Humans never struggled usually when she drowned them, not that strong, they wanted to hear her voice too much for that.

She stopped sinking him into the depths and looked at him closely while her tail wrapped him less strongly, trying to understand why he was struggling so much. She understood when he opened his mouth in a desperate way. He wanted to *live*.

She got rid of him completely and stepped back, feeling disgust of

herself getting through her while the man swam with all his strengths to the surface. Never she ripped off the life of a human who wanted to live, she was certain of that.

*Was she?*

She upped her eyes to the man who was sinking again. She first thought he was dead but she could feel life trying to stay in him. Without knowing why, she hurried to the man and pushed him to the surface as fast as possible. She maintained him out of the water until the other sailors saw him and disappeared as soon as they got him, terrified that she had seen and her own acts.

She followed the boat with a distance until the evening, like she did the last days, but not for the same reasons. When humans almost drown, they rarely went on the sea again, so she knew she would never see him again. That made her sad and she didn't know why. She followed him until it was impossible and disappeared again into the water.

A long time after that, when two full moons went by, she saw her sailor again.

He wasn't on his boat but in a beach, at a certain distance from the harbor, and only put his feet on the water, he seemed distant. She was relieved to see him, so much that she wasn't careful to hide and got closer slowly, staying on a rock. He noticed her and first stepped back away from water like if she could have caught him with the water deep of a few inches only (three maybe), then stepped closer again, towards the rocks, curious. When she stood on her hands to see him better, he turned away immediately, blushing, and she remembered humans didn't like naked breasts.

He kept coming to her, his hand in front of his eyes, and stopped at a few meters, his feet and calves in the water.

"You're the one that wanted to drown me, right?"

She didn't answer to that. He knew the answer, there was no need to confirm anything.

"Why did you spare me?"

-You wanted to live."

He looked at her like if she said horrible words before squeezing his teeth and fists.

"You said that like if I was the first.

-You are. For me.

-You drowned a lot of men?

-A few. Not only men.

-And no one ever resist? Never?

-They like my voice.

-Then why did you stop singing to me? You wanted to test ma will to live?

-I didn't stop. But when you fell into the water, you stop listening.

-How many men do you think would have wanted to live if you didn't spelled them with your voice?

-I don't know and don't care. Humans are bad.

-Bad? Bad for who? The mermaid who drown them? I'm not sure you got a very objective opinion on the question!

-I don't have to justify myself.

-Alright! Why did you came back to me then?

-I don't want to answer that."

He stepped closer than back, grabbing the hat on his hand and hairs between his hands before stepping closer again, eyes full of anger.

"You came first to spell me, you followed me for weeks to drown me then you change your way suddenly and now, weeks after again, you



come back to see me and don't want to explain why?"

She didn't like the way he was talking to her but couldn't say he was wrong to act that way.

"I deserve the right to know why you came back to me after trying to kill me!

-I was worried about you."

He seemed surprised but that wasn't a surprise to her. Human might too by surprised to learn that people who tried to kill them were worried for them. He stepped closer, suspicious.

"Why were you worried?

-I don't know. I never saw human wanting to live. Maybe I wanted to be sure you still wanted to.

-I do.

-Okay. I have to go.

-Will you kill me again?

-I don't think so.

-How reassuring."

He didn't seemed to be.

"You don't look like you are.

-I'm the only one to believe in mermaids and souldn't be worried that one of them could want to kill me or he ones I care about?

-I didn't promise to spare other humans."

He winced.

She put herself higher in the rock to go away but he called her again. She looked at him, suspicious like him.

"Why didn't I stayed under your song spell?

-Maybe you wanted to live more than the other. I don't know. It the first time, I told you, I don't know why you didn't want to die. But if you want to live, I won't stop you. I can't.

-Why not?

-It's like that. But don't worry, I promise to not coming back in your life to kill you. Not until you want to.

-I see.

-Will you let me go?

-I can't really stop you."

So she jumped of her rock and left, swimming fast and far from the beach and her sailor.

One morning, before the dawn, she came back to him. He was shriveled and she was wrinkled. He was on the harbor, a day when no one worked and was here, and he was waiting for her, sat at the edge of the pontoon. She got her shoulders out of the water toward him. It wasn't that she couldn't get more of her body out, but she was careful. He looked tired and didn't wear his sailor hat anymore. She understood what it meant.

She leant her arms singing softly, with her used voice, and he pushed himself out of the pontoon to crash against her. She wrapped her armes and tail around him and stayed at the surface for a moment, wanting to be sure he was sure about what he wanted. He stayed silent, eyes closed and a sad smile on his lips, so she sank into the water, until the depths, hugging the old body against her while singing until she felt no more life in him.

She let him go only a moment latet to bury him in the sand at the brightest spot she knew about then went back to the ocean to continue her life, leaving behing her the human cementery she hard create for so long.

## 8. 8 Mamihlapinatapai

Day 8

Mamihlapinatapai

*Mamihlapinatapai is an exchanged look between two person waiting for the other one to take the first step about something they both desire without any of them to dare starting it.*

Under the desperate eye of their friend, Jane and Dustin fought in a new stare fight. It was about the first one to look away or blinking. Every days, they did that after the lunch and before going back into class. At first, it was about who would have the right to take the last pudding of the school restaurant – Lucas took it, taking advantage of the fact they weren't looking – but fast, they continued to do it without real goal. They kept saying to their friends they were doing it for the competition spirit but no one was truly believing it. They all noticed there was something else between these two that they didn't want to talk about. They said nothing because it wasn't for them to do it.

Max was the first one to theorise that there were something between them and to think they were in love with each other. Mike and Lucas first thought she was false, that they knew Dustin too well and that it wasn't that but when Will told it too, they started to believe it. At the same moment, it has been a long time that Robin and Steve knew it and that Erika was making fun of his brother for not seeing what was going on.

For as long as they played this stupid game, Dustin and Jane knew by heart the eyes of the other. For Jane, Dustin's eyes were the most beautiful she has ever seen – which wasn't too complicated to believe – and for Dustin, Jane had amazing eyes, just that. Dustin wasn't the most romantic person to exist but since Jane, he was drawing little hearts, making rimes and playing with her hair. Jane was more invasive, she was always searching for Dustin, sitting next to him, ask him everything she could. The more they were together, the more obvious it was for everyone about what was happening between those two, except for the two of them.

Everybody had wait so long for them to be together, impatient but nothing happened. Dustin didn't dare talking to Jane and she just didn't want to be the first one to admit her feelings. It became insane for everyone around those idiots that couldn't get it.

One time at lunch, after they had all finish to eat, when they were about to start their bet again, Max decided to step in, determined to end this stupid game. She challenged them to hold on the longer and that the loser had to say what they think of the other. Dustin was the first one to accept while Jane hesitated a moment, she suspected without really knowing what her friend was trying to do.

They stared at each other without blink for a long moment in the playground. Nothing could disturb them, one or the other. They were obstinated and determined by the competition. It was the school alarm that separate them, disturbing Dustin who was always impatient to go to class and look away just a little, just enough for Jane to let burst a little cry of victory. He swore, more upset that he lost that by fear of the bet. He admitted his defeat in front of all his friend who bent toward them, impatient to hear him admit his feeling and he bent toward her and while everyone held their breath, he admitted what he felt for her.

When Jane answered she knew that and Dustin laughed at her reaction, their friends stayed silent. They had the impression that they had miss something important because Jane wasn't surprised and Dustin wasn't clumsy and lumbering because it was how he was. Will was the first to ask them if they were in a relationship and they answered that they were for a moment already, and that they were wondering how to tell them. They friend who thought they knew Dustin and Jane, they stayed silent for a long moment when they realised their mistake, wich made laugh the two others. Later that day, they would have accept their friends secret, they just needed to get through the pain they had in their pride.

## 9. 9 Reverse roles

Day 9

Reverse roles

Jane took off her rollerblades and got in the Wheeler house, greeting them, and hurried herself in the cave of their house. She was angry because the last night, Mike and Lucas went out to go behind Will on their own under the storm and they didn't warn her. She was mad at them to let her on her own when they could go out. She was going to *kill* them for that. They said they even have found something but even if it was Will, she wouldn't let them get away from problems that easily.

"Close the door!" Mike hurried her.

She took a long breath, keeping anger inside for the right moment. She went down the stairs and was stopped by Lucas who grabbed her by the elbows.

"I have to say that I didn't agree with that.

-With what? Searching Will without me?

-What? No, it's logical, we couldn't ask you to come with us under the rain and at night, we would have problems.

-Will is my step brother! I worry about him as much as you!

-Please, stop yelling!" Mike complained.

Jane was about to tell him to fuck off for how him and Lucas behaved with her when she noticed the boy standing in an improvised cabin. He seemed to be about their age, had no hair on his head and wore a too big *Benny's Burgers* shirt. He was looking at them, her in particular, with worry.

"You're scaring him by talking this loud." Mike bawled them out with a soft voice, giving a little of pudding to the boy.

"Who is he?

-We found him yesterday under the rain.

-You go after my brother and come back with a runaway?

-I know, it make no sens!" approved Lucas.

-He is not a runaway! Look at his clothes, he wears a shirt that can only be bought at Benny's. They're is something weird.

-Non. He is just a runaway. He manipulated the nicest person to have free food and changed his clothes to not be recognized.

-And his shaved head?

-Maybe a cancer or his hairs don't grow. Look at his their, they're almost none of them, it's wouldn't be that incoherent. Did he said something or did you just decided to feed him with pudding? It's not a balanced diet. If he was at Benny's, he had only been feed with fries, you're only going to get him sick.

-He is not a dog.

-But except if he's an over-developped human, he as a stomach like everyone else and being feed only with pudding and fries will get him sick. What do you mother think about this?

-She doesn't know.

-Lucas!

-What? It's the truth!"

Jane stared at him, shaking slowly her head with disapoval.

"You have to tell, you can't hide boys in you cave, less when other ones are missing."

She stepped back to the stairs behing her when a chair slide in her way, blocking her way. Sliding *on her own*.

Jane, Lucas and Mike turned back towards the boy whose nose was

bleeding, eyebrows frowned with worry.

"No. You can't."

-O-O-O-

Jane sat beside Bard against the table of the cafeteria where they were, waiting with him that Mike and Lucas find a place to eat, that Jonathan, Steve and Nancy came back, that her parents saved Will.

"I'm reassured to know that after all of that, you'll stay here since Steve wants to keep you with him. He likes you a lot.

-Friends.

-Yeah, he sees you as a friend! Or maybe more like a brother when you think about it.

-Brother?

-Yeah, like Will and I. We act like if we hate eachother but we really don't and I would travel dimensions for him if my parents didn't stop me to.

-It's dangerous.

-I know, but it's like that. Actually, I would risk my life for Mike and Lucas without any hesitation as well. And for you.

-Don't do that. I don't want to lose you."

She felt herself blushing at his words and nibbled her cheek to not do stupid thing.

"I don't want to lose you either. You're my friend."

Bard smiled at her widely and hugged her, happy.

"You're my friend too. My best friend."

She hugged him too to hide her blushing and she let him go when she heard Mike and Lucas scream that the bad guys were here. She stepped away from Bard and took his hand to make him run behind

her in a vain try to run away from the bad peoples.

-O-O-O-

Jane sat on the ground, a little tired by the party. Bard – no, he said his name was Dustin, she had to remembered it – had made her danse all the long, laughing everytime he made her turned because her dress flew lightly around her. Dustin sat next to her and took her hand in his, still smiling. She knew it bothered him a little to not have his cap but he had understood he had to bell well dressed that night. She put her hand on his shoulder and sighed to express what she felt.

"It was fine.

-Please, do not make me dance that much again without let me rest.

-Did I do something wrong?

-You clearly have more energy than I thought and me not. You did nothing wrong, I just wasn't prepared.

-Ok. I like dancing with you.

-Me too. You're surprisly a good dancer.

-Steve taught me.

-I'm not surprised. He is apparently a good dancer. Nancy told me. Did he help you to comb your hair?

-Yes.

-That new.

-You don't like.

-It's not that I don't like, it's more that I'm used to see you with a cap. It doesn't matter. I'm glad you're here-...

-Me too."

She straightened, preparing herself to talk fast so he wouldn't



interrupt her again. She turned towards him and looked at him seriously.

"I'm glad you're here *because* I like you a lot.

-Me too. You're my friend.

-I don't like you that way. I like you more.

-I don't understand.

-I like you as... I like you in the way I would like you to be my lover.

-What's a lover?"

This question stopped her for a moment. She frowned.

"You don't know what a lover is. Of course you don't, you've been free for only a year, what do you know about life? It's clearly not a priority of all the things you need to know."

She sat back against the wall and covered her face with her hand, in shame. She hated herself for wanting Dustin to be her lover when he had no idea what it was.

"I'm sorry. You deserve someone better than me, I'm so selfish.

-You're saying stupid things.

-No! Look at yourself, you have no idea what a lover is and I don't think about it.

-Explain-moi what it is.

-So you feel obligated? I don't want to force you that.

-I want to know. Explain.

-Fine!" She brought her hands back to her dress. "It's like... Lucas and Max, Mike and Will or Nancy and Jonathan.

-I see. Lovers kiss, right? And spend time together?"

She blushed a little more, not daring to look at him.

"Yeah, they do that."

Dustin moved to be in front of her.

"We already spend a lot of time together. I want to spend more.

-Oh?

-Yes. I don't know if I want to kiss because I don't get what people do when they're kissing, it's weird, but I do want to hold your hand. And spend time with you. If that's what you want.

-I don't want to do it because I want to.

-I want to, really. But I don't know if holding hands is enough for you.

-Of course it's enough."

She laughed softly and hugged him, strongly.

"So I'm your lover.

-If you want. I won't obligate you.

-I want.

-So you are my lover."

## 10. 10 Younger

Day 10

Younger

Steve could say he was good baby-sitter. A lot of mothers of Hawkins asked him for his help to take care of their children when they needed it dans for some of them – six or seven in fact – called them mom because of how much they loved him.

The child he liked to baby-sit the most was Dustin Henderson. He was four and already really intelligent and alert. He followed him everywhere and because Claudia had some weak health that she didn't want her loved child to worry, Dustin was with Steve pratically *everytime*. Some people thought Dustin was his child sometimes, he had no idea wath to think about that but that wasn't a problem, not since a long time. The others childrens of "him" were the Sinclair Lucas and Erika, Michael "Mike" Byers, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Will Byers and Jane "El" Hopper the adoptive girl of the Sheriff.

This afternoon, he was baby-sitting Dustin and El. He knews those two shouldn't be stayed alone even for a moment so he was staying on with coffee the rare moments when that happened. Even when they were under supervision, they made stupid things and encouraged one another in their acts. They had imagination, too much for Steve. He was surprised to see how Will and Max were the most calm ones and calmed the others. But that wasn't the subject. The subject was El and Dustin who, for the first time in forever, were sitting on the ground and talked while whispering, a piece of paper and a green pencil between the hands. As such, it was nice, really, but he stayed on guard. It was the best thing to do with those two.

He got closer quietly and squatted at their height to talk to them.

"What are you doing?

-A marriage.

-I see. Wich? Yours?"

Dustin shook his head in negative while El settled for looking at him without guetting her tumb out of her mouth without saying anything. It was the big drama of Hopper: his daughter never talked, too focused on her tumb for that. Steve was one of the rare adults to not obligate her to stop sucking her tumb but he had to be honnest, it was survival insinct. El screamed loud when her tumb was out her mouth because of someone.

Steve put his hands under his chin, touched by the children who didn't say a word, looking at him with love and annoyance.

"Really? I thought that, because you were in love, you were going to marry each other.

-No. Too young.

-Seems logic. So wich marriage is it?

-Yours. With Billy.

-What?" He laughed, surprised and blushing. "What are you talking about? There's nothing with Billy.

-Yes. Kisses."

El took out her thumb out to make a kiss sound before putting it in again, slidding against Dustin. He rubbed his face to regain good capacity.

"For how long have you known it?

-Always.

-Wow, that a lot of time.

-It's El who knows everything.

-It's true that El knews everything. What's the use of your piece of paper? For the guests?

-Yes.

-Who are you going to invite?

-Everyone.

-Aren't you afraid that they will be too many people?" He looked vaguely at the clumsy writing of Dustin. Apparently, everyone was twenty persons.

-And what if we don't want to marry now, Billy and I?

-We know that. We let you choose your date.

-It's too nice for us. I need to agree with Billy.

-Take your time. We're too young to have fun at a marriage."

Dustin's phrase made him laugh. He caught them on his arms and hugged them against him until they complained and asked him to let them go, which he didn't do at first, made them believe for a moment he would eat them. He wasn't stupid, he knew that they would believe it but they played it, screaming for fake and laughing like if they didn't know how to breathe.

When he put them down again, Jane couldn't stop to laugh and Dustin stared at him like if he was upset – which wasn't the case, he knew him too well. He messed their hair up with a smile.

"Thank you for those efforts in my marriage, you too. I don't know how I would do without you.

-You'd be lost.

-It's true. Now, go wash your hands, you wrote on yourself, I can see it."

Dustin tried to retort but Jane abandoned him without hesitation to wash her hands like asked so he followed her, sulking.

Steve sighed and before following them, he took the scribbled paper and the pencil, amused, keeping in mind the idea to talk about the kids' marriages idea to Billy when he'll see him. His reaction could be fun.

## 11. 11 Marriage

Day 11

Marriage

Dustin stared at Mike with horror, like if his friend just told him he wanted to fight him against the Kraken.

"You can't do that. She is going to take it very bad.

-Like if it was going to stop me.

-No but she will kill you. It's been month she and Lucas almost didn't sleep to make sure that everything will be perfect. She almost got fired from her job and they almost canceled it a week before so *I'm begging you* to not do that."

Mike winced but sighed and put the ring back in his pocket, upseted. Dustin sight in relief.

"So for you it's a no?

-Will will make you regret to kneel, so yes, it's a no. I mean, think of Max! She didn't convince Lucas to marry her today, in the middle of winter, with all the weathers risks, just so you get all the attention on you.

-I guess so.

-And I am sure of that. Stay alive dude, it would be sad to lose you on a bad choice."

Mike gave him a little smile and they agreed in silent to make like nothing happened and that none of them put out a ring to ask the opinion of the other about this. They were going to get out of their plank when the door opened on Steve.

"What are you two doing? You have a speech to say guys, it's in a few minutes. Don't tell me you're not ready?

-Of course we are, we're not stupid!"

Dustin turn around to look at Mike when he felt him staying quiet and at the moment he saw his scrumblng dace, he felt all his energy went away.

"Don't tell me you based you speech on *that*?"

-In part.

-Fuck, really? You know what? You're going to improvise something and I don't want any drop of blood, understood?

-What's going on?" Steve was worried.

-Nothing, don't worry about it.

-It's a ittle late for that.

-Too bad!"

he pushed Mike and Steve out of the plank – wich actually was the toilets of the place Lucas and Max had rent – and rushed in the big room, trying with all his might that everything would be okay, knowing too well it wouldn't be the case. He sat at the table and Jane immediately bent towards him, intrigued.

"What's going on with Mike?" She whispered.

-I can't telle you anything to not blow up the day but you should get it in the next days."

Jane didn't understand what he was talking about so he gave her a reassuring smile. He looked at Mike stand up in the platform to improvise a speech and held back a laugh. Jane tightened his arms to got his attention so he bent lightly towards her without quitting his friend with his eyes.

"Promise me we will never get married."

Her request made him smile.

"Promise, never. For now, appreciate like us all the speech of Mike, he had to improvise a good part."

She got him an intrigued look and frowned and turn quickly to their friend embroidered around the very little speech he had left, stammering.

When Dustin turned to look at Max and Lucas and had to bite his lips to not laugh. While Max didn't understand what happened – Well, Mike had promise he knew his speech – and frowned so much that he almost couldn't see her eyes, Lucas seemed to understand, pinched the bridge of the nose, probably holding himself to laugh like him did.

Later, Max tossed the bouquet like she had to – she did it lately because Nancy has lost it trying to get it away from her children – and tossed him so well it rose her brother reflexes who catch it before understandig. The flash of Jonathan camera on the disoriented and outraged face of Billy who hurried to give the the flowers to the first person next to him – without asking his opinon to Will who was just passing by to grab an aperitif – before disappear from everyone's view.

Jane pulled the sleeve of Dustin, telling him the throw was made for Billy to cact it with a big smile. He noticed the blood flewing a little from her girlfriend nose and act like if he was chocked.

"How dare you concede to Max whims for a thing that futile?" He asked her, biting his cheek to not laugh because it was a really good idea.

-Max seemed to want it so much, I couldn't deny it to her, I'm her bridesmaid."

He smiled, feeling pride for his girlfriend to have fun about that kind of prank.

"Never change.

-Promise."



## 12. 12 Supernatural

Day 12

Supernatural

Dustin sat on the car hood and left his shirt to let Steve take a look at his injury. He fought a werewolf and she sank her claws in his back and scrath up to his belly before they finally kill her.

Steve winced and went searching something to take care of the injury.

"It's not pretty. Not at all.

-I feel almost nothing.

-Believe me, you're not well. Call her.

-No.

-Dustin, call her or I will and believe me, she will not appreciate at all to see you didn't call her when you need her.

-But it's almosot don't hurt! I won't call her at every injury. I handled it very well before, I cant still do it."

He took care of the injury, holding a painful complainte, toothaching. Steve let him do it, arms folded before sighing.

"I'm going to call her.

-Don't do it.

-Jane!

-Steve, fuck!

-Hello Steve."

He swore in a quiet tone, putting his shirt down before looking at Jane who just appeared. She stared at him for a long time, noticing

his red fingers covered in his own blood before looking at Steve.

"Hey Jane, it's good to see you. Sorry for the disturbing.

-Do not worry about that. What's happening?

-Dustin was attacked by a were-wolf.

-I'm fine!

-He bleeding a lot."

Jane looked again at Dustin, making him withdraw on himself on for a moment.

"Why didn't you call me?

-You're not my nurse.

-No, I'm your friend. If you're not okay and I can help you, let me do it."

She got closer and put her fingers on him. He felt immediately better and got up, feeling no pain anymore.

"Thanks.

-Si you had try to take care of that on your own, your would have been bloodless in a few hours.

-I've already said thank you."

Jane seemed to not like the lack of empathy. She turned toward Steve.

"Did something happened during the last time you called me?

-No, nothing strange. He misses you and won't dare telling you or ask you to stay.

-Steve!

-I leave you a moment? I have to go to walk.

-Thanks Steve.

-What about my opinion?"

But Steve didn't answered, letting them on their own, waving his hand. Dustin sighed and stood against the car, trying to ignore Jane's stare as long as possible.

"Dustin.

-What?

-You miss me?

-Oh my-...! Don't listen Steve's bullshit!"

He noticed the sadness of Jane and felt guilty. He lowers his eyes to not look at her.

"Sorry.

-You don't have to.

-Of course I do. You don't like it when something happen to me. I know it's because I'm the vessel of...

-It's because you're my friend." Jane put her hand on his arm. "You're my friend before everything else."

Dustin look at her with tenderness and smiled at her.

"Steve is my friend too."

He smiled more, amused.

"I hope so. It would be sad if he wasn't.

-I suppose you don't want me too stay with you.

-What?"

She smiled, teasing.

"If I couldn't listen Steve, you don't want me to stay.

-You're stupid. You know it's not true.

-Really?

-Of course. I want nothing more than staying with you.

-Me too." She looked away, a little sad. "But I have to keep an eye on Heaven.

-I know. I guess you have to go.

-Yes. But I'll come back soon. Just call me. Maybe I'll join you even if you don't.

-That would be nice."

Jane put her hands on Dustin's shoulders and bent to kiss his forehead before leaving in a flapping of wings, leaving Dustin all alone on the side of the road.

## 13. 13 Sick

Day 13

Sick

When Jane and Will left, it affected everyone in the group, mostly because they couldn't see each other for months and that their only ways to communicate were the phone and Dustin radio. They were impatient to see each other and afraid that they had lost their friendship because of the separation.

A winter night, Dustin was too sick to sleep so he was trying hard to read his comics, in vain. His nose flew too much, his eyes cried, his throat hurt and his head was too heavy for him to do anything.

He sighed and put his comic on the ground beside his bed and tried to lie down and sleep when his radio gridlocked. Intrigued, he looked at it until he heard the voice of Jane. He got out of his bed laboriously then took it. He coughed loudly before talking.

"Jane?" His voice hurt.

-Dustin. You're sick.

-You can hear it with my voice?

-That's why I'm calling you."

He frowned at her answer.

"You knew I was sick before calling?

-Yes.

-You got your powers back?"

His voice was weaker and weaker so he forced on it to continue to talk to his friend.

"I think. You should go to sleep.

-Not now... Well, it's not like I could anyway.

-Okay. I stay with you in that way.

-You sure?

-Yes.

-Okay."

He got back to his bed, almost lying on it, hugging his pillow against him.

"How's school?

-Good. I understand maths.

-I knew you were good at it." He started to smile like an idiot, proud of her. At her laugh, he knew she was proud too.

"I think some girls want to be my friends.

-It's a good thing, no?

-Well... They're cute, really cute, but they're not Max. All in the clothes, nothing in the head.

-Well, it's usually like that with normal girls. But you and Max, you're not normal, way better.

-Thank you. Have you talk to Mike recently?

-If it's because you're truly not a thing anymore, yes I did. He... He's doing well. Pretty well in fact, when you think of it.

-And you?

-I'm doing great. I'm fine."

He stayed quiet a moment, unknowing what to answer. Finally, Jane talked again.

"Did you fell asleep?

-No. I had nothing to say.

-Okay.

-Hey I'm sick so I'm saying stupid things but I miss you.

-It's not stupide. I miss all of you too.

-There is something I should tell you. But I can't.

-Why not?

-Because I'm sick. It's not a good things."

He could hear Jane move and a door closing then car sounds in the distance. He remembered Will had told them they had a terrace so she might went on it.

"Friend don't lie.

-I don't lie. I... I'd rather not say something stupid.

-Dustin." She reprimands him.

He sighed – and coffed – and bet on his radio to be heard with his tired voice.

"The thing is that I don't want you to hate me.

-Why would I?"

He didn't answered.

"Dustin?

-I love you."

He got no answer from Jane, even after waiting a moment. He withdraw into himself, feeling sicker than he was before the call, and shut down his radio before hiding under his sheet, having no will to get out anymore.

He stayed cloistered this way a moment before feeling a soft energy

hugging and rocking him. Before falling asleep, he could recognize El voice resounding in his head to say *Me too*.



## 14. 14 Angst

Day 14

Angst

El had closed the portal. Monsters would die and everything would be better. No more bad guys, no more enemies, nothing. She would be happy, *everyone* would be happy. She fell into her father's arms, exhausted but reassured. It was over.

He helped her to get on her feet after a moment then they left the building. She asked him to join Byer's house to find her friends. He accepted her ask and after lying her on the back of the car so she could rest, he took her back to the Byer's House.

When they arrived, they saw no one else than Billy who was in a comatose state way to far to tell them where the other were. Jim swore and started to get angry at the children who left without his authorization and clearly without Steve stopping them. They waited a moment, checking on Billy's state – who was right aside the bruises and profound sleep.

They didn't wait too long. A car stopped on the Byer's field, headlights on. Jim went out to understand what was happening, followed by El, and they both saw Mike, Lucas, Max and Steve getting out of the car quickly, slamming the doors. Steve seemed truly hurt but they didn't have the time to worry about that because the kids screamed at them to find something to apply care and Steve got Dustin out of the car, carrying him in his arms.

El felt her heart tighten up. Everything *wasn't okay*. Jim grab her and put her aside to let everyone in and she followed Steve's eyes while he went to the living room to lie him on the couch.

"What happened? You were supposed to stay *here*!" Jim shouted with anger and worry because Dustin belly was badly hurt, really badly.

While children came back with things to apply care, Steve tried to explain. They wanted to push back all the monsters when Dustin

found his own demodog, D'Artagnan, and tried to make it leave to protect everyone but it attacked him and bit.

Hearing that, Jane had tears growing up, understanding what everyone else refused. She stepped closer to the couch while Jim bent on Dustin to try to slow the blood flow, and she cuddled his wet forehead of sweat, getting out the curly locks that were glued on it. Dustin opened tearful eyes towards her, jaw tight.

"I'm sorry." She said.

He tried to smile to comfort her and opened his mouth to talk but at the first sound he made, he just cried. She looked at her friends, Steve and Max. They were all worried but she knew they started to understand what was happening. She turned towards Dustin again and put his cap back on his head.

"I'm really sorry that I wasn't fast enough. You don't deserve that.

-N-no. I...

-Do not talk, you're hurting yourself." She look quickly at Jim who had hands wet with blood, changing compresses again and again. She put her hand on his arm and he look at her quickly before understanding what she wanted to say. He shook his head, not wanting to accept it. It wasn't supposed to happen like that but it was, there was nothing they could do.

She kept cuddling Dustin's forehead and cheeks to get out the sweat when she notice his lips moving.

"Don't talk, I said. It's not good."

But he insisted and rose a tired hand to her shoulder to bring her closer so she could hear him. She let him do it.

"I am... sorry. I didn't meant... to... make you cry."

She didn't notice she was crying.

"I'm not angry at you.

-I'm... a very bad... friend.

-Of course not."

He smiled a little but she knew it wasn't a real one.

"Yes... I..." his voice lowered. "I let... everyone believe... I love Max.

-You shouldn't lie.

-I know... I was scared you would be mad?

-Why?"

But Dustin shook his head. Instead, he cuddled her cheek softly. He turned his head to look at his friend who were crying.

"I don't want... I just want to... help.

-I know Dustin. And you helped as much as you could.

-I'm dying.

-Yes Dustin. You are dying."

She couldn't explain how she could stay so calm. Maybe it was because she saw too many people die before and that she could now even get threw the dead of those she loved. Dustin stopped looking at his friend but didn't look at her either. He was looking at his own belly that Jim was trying to cure and lift a hand to get him away.

"I'm dying. It won't do anything.

-Shut up kid, you don't know what you're saying.

-No... It's El who's saying it.

-I'm Jane."

She sincerely doubt it would be useful for anything but Dustin looked at her again.

"Really..? Thank you for telling... Thank you... really..."

She ignored Jim who left and swore, Mike leaving the house to cry, followed by Lucas, Max who hid against Steve like if it would lied about what just happened... She closed her friends eyelids not so long after he gave his last breath.

## 15. 15 Mike

Day 15

Mike

Mike knew that when he was with El, he had become an idiot. He passed all his days to kiss her because it was what peoples in series did and ignored everyone: Lucas, Max, Dustin, Will... But he understood the problems way later after El dumped her, when she said she loved him and kissed her. He understood it wasn't a kiss like all they shared before. It was a goodbye kiss. He was sad for a moment but he understood what El wanted and seeing her being so happy when they weren't together anymore made him understand how better things were this way. And later again, when Dustin told them that Suzy and him ended their relationship because her parents didn't want her to keep that relationship, Mike decided to focus more on his friend to be a better one. Well, better than he had been.

El, Lucas, Dustin and Max were having a snowball fight, laughing like idiots while he had to get trough his lost, next to Will who abandonned way sooner because he was sick for a few days, sat on a bench of the park. Because he wasn't following the terrible fight, he didn't knew what was happening and when he looked back at them, he frowned, trying to understand what was happening.

"Who's winning?"

-Boys." Will answered without leaving his comics from his eyes.

-How could you know?

-Lucas is extremely good at throwing things.

-Yeah but Max and El too.

-Lucas's better than Max and El won't attack Dustin.

-Why not?"

Will didn't answer so he loked at him to try to understand his silence

and saw him completely red, hiding behind his comic, like if he regret that he talked. He frowned again and looked at the others to see what Will could see and not him but there still wasn't anything for him.

While Max and Lucas fell on each other and laughed, throwing snowballs at each other faces, he noticed El helping Dustin to get up from snow. He watch closely and was intrigued by her smile and when he understood, taking a huge inspiration of surprise and face Will who was trying to disappear on the bench.

"Is El in love of Dustin?

-Talk louder, go on!"

Mike shut up immediately and looked again at El who was still smiling at Dustin and laughing at what must be a bad joke because he wasn't good about humor. He sprawled on the bench and put his hands on his mouth, dismayed by his stupidity to not see anything before.

"For how long have you known?

-A moment. A *long* moment. I can't believe no one noticed it. Well, maybe Max knows it. El says a lot to Max, casually.

-And Dustin?

-What, Dustin?

-He knows?"

Will sighed, closing his comic and faced Mike.

"No, he doesn't, if he knews, I wouldn't tell you that you talk too loud.

-Why didn't she tell him?

-Because not everyone is good at feelings.

-But she had no problems to telle me her feelings when we were

together.

-Yeah? After how long?"

Mike opened his mouth to answer and realized that he didn't have the answer. He blushed and shut his mouth. Will took pity on him.

"It's okay Mike. She loved you, really. But now, you have to let her the time to talk to Dustin by herself.

-No need to specify.

-I'm sure that yes, I have to.

-You're exaggerating.

-Maybe, we'll see.

-O-O-O-

Mike watch Dustin closely. He was chossing the comics he was going to buy. He seemed happy. He head was a little red because of the book that fell on him, this idiot.

Dustin finally notice his look and frowned, staring at him.

"What's wrong?

-Nothing, I'm just looking at you.

-Yeah but why?

-Nothing!

-Okay, Okay!"

Dustin seemed a little bored by his action but turned back to his comics. Mike noticed then he had taken a Wonder Woman comic.

"You read Wonder Woman now?

-Yeah, why not?

-I don't know. It's just El favorite hero."

He tried to catch his reaction when he talked about his ex but that wasn't what he was expected. Dustin seemed sad and uncomfortable.

-You still love her?

-What? No! No, of course not! You don't have to worry about that!

-Why would I?"

Mike felt panic growing. He had no answer for Dustin about that. He just smiled and looked away.

"Mike?

-I just said that like that.

-Okay..."

Dustin turned back to his comics choice for a while before grunting because Mike was still staring at him.

"Oh my god! Juste tell me what the problem is already!

-I... I was wondering if you were in love with someone."

Dustin raised an eyebrow high.

"Is that your way of telling me you have feelings for me?

-No!"

He couldn't help but blush and stuttered and took a step back to stop blushing.

"I wasn't talking about me.

-Yeah, sure.

-Really! I was thinking about a girl."

Dustin was really surprised.



"Wait, you know a girl who has feelings for me?

-Non."

He answered to fast.

"Tell me.

-No, really. I promise.

-Alright, let's say I believe you, I don't have any feelings for a girl.

-Oh..."

He was strangely disappointed. Well, it was logic, he knew El had feelings for Dustin and wanted her happiness.

"So, what make you believe El has feelings for me?

-What?"

He was too loud. Dustin was blushing bothered to roll eyes.

"Why do you think El, our friend Jane Hopper, has feelings for me?

-Why do you think of her?

-First, I know you're sure a girl we both know has feelings for me. Then, she's close enough and old enough to not take that as a joke and you respect that she hasn't told me yet, so it's one of our friend wich include: El, Max, Robin, Erika, Suzy and Nancy. Once again, Erika is too young. And it's not Suzy because she doesn't talk too much to you, she'd rather talk to Erika and Robin. To continue, Max and Nancy are in a relationship. So there is only El and Robin left and I know it's not Robin because it's a touchy subject for you so it's El."

That... was incredibly well thought. And El was going to kill him.

"I... I can't tell.

-Listen Mike, I don't know what you're trying to do but I don't particulary like it.

-It's not a joke if that what you think!

-Really? Because it looks like.

-I promise!

-It doesn't matter."

For the rest of the day, Mike kept promising to Dustin it wasn't a joke and that it was real but this one didn't listen.

At the moment they had to separate, Dustin held Mike back.

"If I had feeling for El, would you be mad?

-Of course not!

-Are you sure?

-Dustin, we're friends and it's more important that all the feelings I could have for a girl, even El.

-I don't think you should tell her that. But... I appreciate, really." He hesitate a moment, tightening his comics against him. "Maybe. Maybe I like Jane.

-Really? You should tell her!

-It's out of the question. El really really need honnesty so if she still tell me about her feelings, so she's not ready to have relationship. I won't obligate her to tell anything if she's not ready, she deserves that I take the chance to wait for her."

He could understand that.

"You're a good person.

-I do my best for it."

-o-o-o-

"I wanted to tell you something.

-I'm listening."

Mike was busy to take notes of the colors changings of his chemistry exercise he was doing with El who was doing it as well on their lesson sheet. He had to make sure to make no faults but listening to her distracted him.

"I'm dating Dustin."

Beautiful mistake. He cawed a "what" of surprise wich resound in all the class and get everyone atetntion. He noticed Dustin's look, exactly, and stared at him until he lowered his eyes before looking at El.

"Since when?

-Yesterday."

Obviously, she had wanted to tell to her friends as soon as possible now that she felt ready.

"I see.

-Do not be mad at Dustin.

-Why do you all think I will react badly?" It was upsetting.

El shrugged.

"I don't care about who you date as long as you're happy, and I don't care if it's Dustin. But I'm happy you tell me.

-So you have nothing to say about it?

-At all."

El seemed relieved to learn that and he could see her relax.

"That's good."

Yes it was.

## 16. 16 Poetry

Day 16

Zero

Eleven, it's the number on her arms. The one Papa gave her.

Ten, all the people she loves. They are her friends, family, sister.

Nine, it's the number of time she kissed Mike. Awkward kisses from a childish love.

Eight, the number of Kali, the only one like her.

Seven, the number of time she heard Dustin says they were friends before not being able to meet his look again.

Six, the number of books she chose by herself.

Five, there were five moments when she asked Dustin what was going on.

Four, all the people she let die without being able to save them.

Three, three times he refused to answer, changing the subject and diverted her attention to other subjects.

Two, two times he answered. First he denied the fact that there was a problem, repeating that everything was okay. Finally, to confess with tears in the eyes that he felt something for her and that he regret it.

One. And he left for one month to camp Nowhere, too scared to face his words. One month after what he came back and repeat to everyone who would hear him or not that he had a lover named Suzy.

Zero. Not a day passed after that without Jane thinking of his confession and feeling bad inside.

## 17. 17 Everything the other feels

Day 17

Everything the other feels

It wasn't Dustin fault. He didn't choose to have a soulmate with such a dreadful life and couldn't do anything against the bruises, bleeding nose, sudden panic attacks or the tattoo on his forearm representative off a zero and two ones that appeared when he was five. He didn't ask for the nightmares, monsters with giant mouth as large as their head, morbid visions of emaciated bodies or with head turned in the wrong side. He couldn't appreciate to learn new languages too fast because he didn't exactly understand them or being the first to know how to swim because he developed aquaphobia or well more of every liqui surfaces on what he could enter, no matter how profound it was. He didn't ask for his father to left them and her mother to lose taste to things to concentrate only on her son and cats.

Dustin never had friends before Hawkins. He arrived there when he was ten and he was deseperate to find someone who would appreciate him despise his panic attacks and all the other problems one day.

One afternoon at the end of autumn, he had a brutal panic attack during mathematics class. His nose was bleeding profusely and he couldn't see anything at all, like everytime it happened. He started to screaming in terror and fell off his chair, rolling into a ball and being incapable of say anything, having no idea who to call for help. He heard others kids screaming around him, terrified, and panicked more because he had no idea about what to do calm down and for the crisis to stop. He felt then a first hand stepping on his back, different from the unpleasant pain on his arms. This feeling took him away from his panic until he head a voice of a child on his age murmur to him a following of words that made no sens but finished to deconcentrate sufficiently so he didn't feel panic anymore, understanding then that his own panic appease his soulmate too. It was the first time Mike talked to him, achieving to calm him by saying unlogical words on purpose. Not so much after ththat, they became friend and he also became friend with Will and Lucas.

Having friends was different than everything he ever knew. Less people made fun of him or had pity on him, which was fine. Part by part, he learned how to communicate with his soulmate, relaxing them during crisis or when they were sad. He also learned to not live only on their feelings but on his and even share what he felt with them. He couldn't get away from all the bad parts but he could finally handle it

-o-o-o-

Dustin, Lucas and Mike watch closely the bald-headed girl, Eleven, who had tried to get naked in front of them. He didn't know how to explain it but he could feel all the sadness and fear of the young girl – which shouldn't be the case because his soulmate was supposed to be traumatized enough to be a grown up. It was weird and he had no idea what it meant. When they separate to turn back home, Dustin spent all the night awake, thinking of Eleven and what was possibly happening.

The next afternoon, after their day class, they turned back to Mike's house and found him in his room with the girl, trying to keep her busy. Mike and Lucas started to fight to know what was the best thing to do between warn Mike's mother or not and when Lucas started to open the door, it closed roughly and without any reason. Dustin felt blood leaking from his own nose before seeing the same thing happening to Eleven. He wiped his nose quickly, himself in shock by what Eleven just did and not understanding the obvious.

-o-o-o-

El screamed with rage pushing the Demogorgon back against the wall of the classroom and Dustin fell immediately on the ground, paralyzed by the pain. He had no idea how El could handle it but he was in too much pain and had to bite his cheek until he bled to not scream with pain. He felt blood leaking more and more from his nose and ears and when he rose laboriously his eyes, he could see El keeping pushing the Demogorgon against the wall, and grey and white particules dispersed in all the room while the light were flashing in an epileptic way... and nothing. No more pain, rage, strange fears, nothing. The Demogorgon had disappeared. El too.

Lucas went to help him to get up while Mike called for El but Dustin understood immediately that El was gone and began to cry.

-O-O-O-

Dustin thanked Nancy for the dance and went back to sit on the platform of the gymnasium, acting like he was resting while he was a little sad. It wasn't that dancing with Nancy hadn't be a good thing, it was far from that, he could only appreciate it, but he has the feeling that he was a loser. He spent all the afternoon to be classy and inviting any girl to dance with him, but they all refused so, yeah, Nancy dancing with him was just pity because he was all alone. He hated this feeling of failure.

His first reflexe was to step away when to people sat next to him but then he recognized Mike and El. He noticed that his friend seemed strangely sad and worried.

"What's happening?

-I don't know. Everything was great and then she started feeling wrong.

-Did you stepped on her feet?

-No! I think it's her soulmate because she really was having fun and suddenly, she felt bad feelings that weren't hers. Can you believe no one ever told her what a soulmate was?

-Really?"

He looked at her with worry while she still seemed bad.

"Yes! And it's apparently the first time she felt something that not her so strong.

-Oh." He got closer again and put his hand on El's arm to recomfort her. Mike put on his knees in front of her to do the same.

"I don't know what to do. It was easier when it was you, I had a concrete idea about what was happening to you but there... And I don't know, it really is the first time she feels that way like that.

-If her soulmate is like me, it's logical."

Mike and El faced him so suddenly he blushed and stuttered for a moment before knowing what to say.

"I... You know how my soulmate is so brutal in all they feel so I always try to not force her with my own feelings while they – he or she, I don't know – feels all of them so strongly. So maybe El's soulmate couldn't hold all their sadness or whatever they feel back

-You hold yourself back everytime?" El asked with a tiny voice, her eyes bright with tears and Dustin felt the same.

-I have to. You have no idea what it is to have a panic attack when everything was okay a second ago and not being able to do anything because it doesn't depend on you.

-Of course I do, I had a panic attack before and never knew how to handle it, just waited until it ended."

And Dustin could understand that because he never went through his crisis alone, he always needed someone else.

The three of them waited where they were for a moment to feel better before El and Mike went back to dance and Dustin couldn't explain why Mike had kept an eye on him for so long, watching him in a way he couldn't understand.

-o-o-o-

Mike had called Dustin to get help to find a place where to put his things so his little sister wouldn't touch them and he went immediately, a little surprised that no one else came. After a good hour of work, they took a break on the Wheeler's kitchen to have cookies and drink.

"I think I know who's El's soulmate."

Dustin faced Mike while still drinking slowly his drink, intrigued. He found really impressive the fact that Mike had found the soulmate of someone else, even El. It was pretty rare that soulmates themselves didn't discover it by themselves, because of the fact that they almost,



if it wasn't always, felt everything the same way. He put down his drink to answer.

"Really?"

-Yes. And I'm positive about it. It took me a while to admit it but I known it for a long time. And Lucas knows too. And Max. And Will. And...

-Wait, who doesn't?

-You. I can litteraly say that everyone knows. Even Steve and he is an idiot.

-Don't you dare insulting him.

-I dare because he is an idiot. Wich doesn't mean I don't appreciate him."

Dustin grumbled because he didn't appreciate that, but let it go for this time, his curiosity being stronger.

"So, who do you all think is her soulmate?"

Mike face him with a serious face that confuse him. He frowned, a little worried.

"You.

-What?"

Dustin frowned more and lost himself in his words, searching some excuse to justify that he wasn't El soulmate but Mike stop him, raising his hand in front of him.

"Don't, I know it's you. We all know. You think the same things at the same time, have nose bleed at the same time, cry at the same time... It's just obvious."

Dustin had no idea what to answer when he understood the obvious and stayed mouth opened for a moment before blushing strongly.

"But...

-Stop, even El knows. Why do you think we're not together anymore.

-You-... What? You're separated? But you love her!

-Yes.

-Did you left her because of me?"

He was horrified and tried to concentrate to not make it too strong, vainely. He couldn't think about what Mike was telling him. Mike shook his head.

"I didn't. She's the one who dumped my ass.

-I'm sorry. I'm so sorry, I-...

-Do not! I understand.

-But... No. You... You...

-Dustin, take a minute to think, I don't want you to panic."

His words strangled themselves in his throat. Mike put his drink under his view until he drank it, taking to time to think about it. He put down the glass when it was empty.

"I don't want the two of you to separate because of me.

-It's not your fault.

-Yes it is. It's clearly because I'm an obstacle by being El's soulmate.

-No, you're not an obstacle.

-But...

-El dumped me because she needs time to understand what a soulmate is, Dustin, not because you're hers. Well, I do know you like her.

-No!

-Dustin. I know it. You're like that, you're an easy heart. You fell easily in love and I found it weird that it wasn't the case for El so I kept an eye on you and I know you love her. You just refuse to admit it because you know I love her too. You're not the one between her and I, I'm the one between the two of you."

Dustin had no idea what to answer but he knew his face was completely red. Mike finished his own drink and pat friendly his shoulder.

"You should maybe explain to El what is a soulmate. After all, you took time to get it on your own. You could think about it together and, who knows, get closer. You deserves it." Dustin was going to find an excuse or something to be sure about Mike state be he stopped him again with a reassuring smile. "You're coming? We didn't finish to clean my room."